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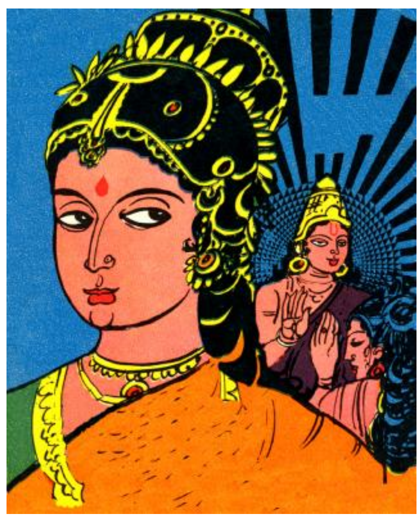
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Srinivasa Balabharati

KUNTI

English Translation

Gannamaraju Saibaba



Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,
Tirupati

Srinivasa Balabharati - 139
(*Children Series*)

KUNTI

Telugu Version
Dr. C. V. Subbanna

English Translation
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FOREWORD

If a beautiful garden is to be raised, one needs to take proper care of tender flower plants. In the same way in order to create a good society, great care needs to be taken of young children who are going to be future citizens of India. All their intellectual attainments will be futile if they fail to learn of their culture and its greatness. They need to be told of great men and women of this country so that they are inspired by their ideals. The essentials of our culture should be given to them in the form of simple and charming stories. They will cherish these ideals and be guided by them. They will promote good and they will love the society they live in. They make their families proud and bring great prestige to their country when they grow up into good citizens.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have brought out these booklets for children in Telugu under Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series. Although meant for children, they are useful to the elderly too. They have found place in the book shelves of every family. The stories of legendary men and women are narrated in a simple way. We hope that more and more children will read them and profit by them.

I congratulate Dr. R. Sri Hari, Editor-in-Chief, TTD for his efforts in bringing out the English translations of SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES so well. We have received co-operation of many learned men and women in our efforts to popularize this series. I am thankful to them.

In the Service of the Lord

Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.
Tirupati.

FOREWORD

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. They need apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons at tender so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenets of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculum.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lives of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr.S.B. Raghunathacharya under "Bala Bharati Series". The response to these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with, some of the books are now brought out in English and Hindi by T.T.D. for the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets, primarily intended to the growing children and also to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

R. SRI HARI
Editor-In-Chief
T.T.D.

Welcome To Srinivasa Balabharati Series

The series is the outcome of abundant grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

This will be an unfailing source of inspiration to the young.

It enshrines the best of Bharatiya tradition. May this noble endeavour be successful.

India has been known for its culture and civilization, its ethical and dharmic way of life from time immemorial. India has marched ahead with its commitment to dharma, its resistance to adharma, its espousal of life-affirming values and its humane attitude to life as a journey towards God realization. Those who embodied these values in their life have been a beacon of light to us. Their impact is deep on the life we lead. Young boys and girls will find them exemplary and feel proud of their invaluable heritage. They will love their motherland and dedicate themselves to its service.

It is therefore necessary that the young learn about these great men and women so that they will realize their indebtedness to them for their selfless contribution to the enrichment of life. This should indeed be a chief component of true education which ensures the perennial continuity of Indian culture and civilization. SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES has come into existence to acquaint the young boys and girls with right perspective of Indian life and values through a series of booklets written exclusively for this purpose describing in brief the lives of great men and women.

We welcome you to share our joy in launching these booklets.

S.B. Raghunathacharya

Chief Editor

KUNTI

Childhood :

Kunti was the lovely daughter of Yadavas, sister of Vasudeva and paternal aunt of Sri Krishna. Originally, her name was Pruthu. Kunti Bhoja adopted her as he had no children. So she was called Kunti. Just as a flower spreads its fragrance soon after birth, she got appreciation as a good girl from her childhood. She was loved by all the elders. Her devotion towards God and teachers must be appreciated. In her house she was liked by one and all. King Kunti Bhoja was not new to her. He was the son of her father's paternal aunt. So she had enough intimacy with him.

Whenever great people visited the house, the king used to make Kunti touch their feet in token of respect and ask them to bless his daughter and make her serve the great people.

Time was going on. Days were rolling. Kunti grew up like a half moon.

Test for patience :

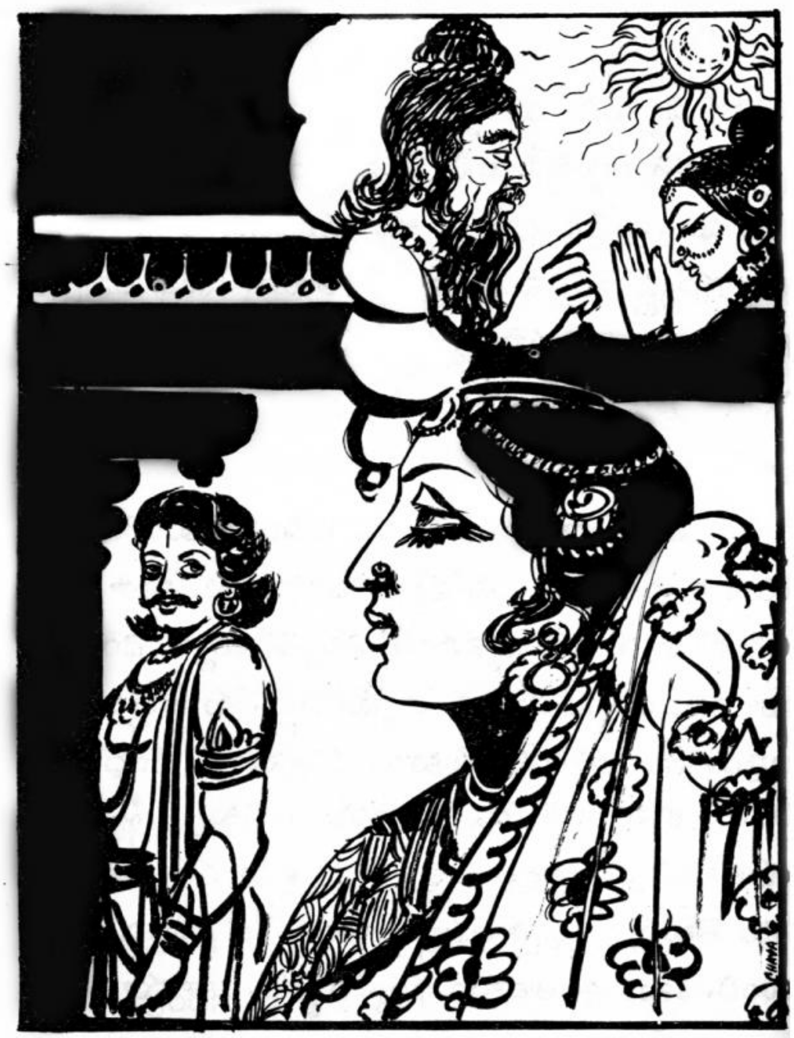
One day Kunti Bhoja convened the court. Surprisingly Rishi Doorvasa came there. He was born with Rudra's Amsa. All were afraid of him. He was famous for his anger. His curse was very powerful. Kunti was appointed to serve him. Her father Bhoja told Kunti that service to Doorvasa was a test to her

patience. Kunti agreed to serve him happily. She told him that it was her fortune to serve the Rishi and the service to Rishi was a leading light to her life. She got blessings from her father.

Mantropadesam of Doorvasa :

Rishi Doorvasa stayed for one year in the house of Kunti Bhoja. Nobody knew when and where he would go and come. He would say "I am going to particular Asram, will return by tomorrow evening", but would return in the midnight on the same day. He was never satisfied with the water and mat available there. He asked for food. If fruits are hard, he says that they are raw and unripened. If fruits are soft, he says that they are rotten and throws away on her face. Kunti served such a great man. She was called Bhoodevi for having unlimited patience. Doorvasa pleased with her service said to her "Daughter! I am very much pleased with your service. Ask me what you want?" She had no desire to ask. She served him selflessly. Kunti said to Doorvasa "Mahatma! What is there I require? You are satisfied, that's my gift. My father feels happy." She saluted him with folded hands.

The Rishi Doorvasa said "You are a child. You do not know. You are unable to ask. I will give you Mantra. Please take it. If you call any deity, the deity will come and fulfil your desire." She received the mantra without any objection. Teaching mantra to Kunti, bleessing Kunti Bhoja Doorvasa went on his own way.



Soon after want. (Desire) :

Kunti was like a blossomed flower. She was young. One day she sat witnessing the beauty of the dawn. She was very bright. Her heart was filled with love and thinking of ...

“Oh! How beautiful the Sun is? Bless me a son with natural ear-rings, diamond armour. He must be brilliant like you.”

She chanted Mantra, unknowingly.

Immediately the Sun appeared before her. He was calm and peaceful. Seeing the divine personality, Kunti was afraid of him and tried to run away. The Sun God told her not to be afraid of him. He told her that he had come over to fulfil her desire.

Kunti was shivering with fear. Folding hands before the Sun, she told him humbly “Mantra is taught by a Rishi. The power of Mantra is not known to me. Without any thought, I have uttered the Mantra to test its power. I have never expected the immediate result. I have done it out of ignorance. Excuse me” and saluted him.

But the Sun did not agree. He said “My visit will never be in vain. I will fulfil your desire.” She said “I am a virgin. If I get a child, parents, relatives will laugh at me. I cannot live. Save me.”

Then the Sun replied“Your purity of maiden hood(virginity) will not perish. You will not be blamed by the world. I will give you a boon. Do not speak”

Kunti who came forward said to the Sun God “You are the ruler of Satya (truth) and Dharma. If you feel it dharma, you do it. I do not speak.” She became calm with overwhelming joy. The Sun blessed her with a son and disappeared.

What shall I do Now?

The union of Kunti and the Sun resulted in the birth of Karna. He was born with natural diamond ear-rings. His body was covered with armour. He was like a second Sun. Kunti lost her wisdom and she felt giddy. She had self realisation. She wondered such a son would be born to any body and she thought it was her fortune.

She was not able to declare the child as her son in the public. She was very sad. She was afraid of the world for giving birth to a child as an unmarried mother. She was afraid of the blame that surrounded her like wild fire. A thought struck her mind. At once she put the son in a box safely and some quantity of money. She left the box in the flow of river Aswa. She had no idea what she was doing. Simply she stood silent looking at the box.

Sorrow of Kunti :

The box was floating along the flow of the water. She noticed the box to the maximum distance possible. She saw in all directions. She was alone. She wept for a while blaming her fate.

She argued "Why did the sage come to my house? Why did he teach Mantra? Why did I utter the mantra and welcome the Sun God? In spite of my refusal, why did he bless me with a son? "

"He blessed me with a son. He wore diamond ear-rings and vajrakavacha by birth itself. " She was distressed for leaving the marvellous son in the water. She did not know to which place the son would go to and who would take the opportunity of kissing him and protecting his interests. She thought that she would recognise him any day by his natural twinkling diamond ear-rings and fair personality. She thought that she would be happy by seeing her son in a good position in the society. She returned to her palace thinking that the pooja performed by her has resulted in this.

Play of the fate :

The box left by Kunti in the river travelled via Charmanvati, Yamuna, Ganga phase wise. The box travelled in the waves like a cradle and reached Champapura in a country called Suta.

Atiratha, a friend of Dhrutarashtra who was taking bath along with his wife saw the box. His wife Radha opened it and they saw a male child shining with glory of diamonds and gold ornaments. They had no children. They took the child into the hands thinking it as a God's gift. It was the play of the fate that the son of a king became the son of a charioteer and he was named as Radheya, son of Radha.

Marriage of Kunti :

Kunti Bhoja announced swayamvara for Kunti to select a bride groom. The noble character and beauty of Kunti were praised all over the world. The elderly people belonging to Kuru dynasty wanted to get Kunti as a daughter-in-law.

Panduraja was a great hero and warrior. He attended the Kunti swayamvara. Many princes attended the swayamvara. It was the choice of Kunti to select a person she likes. She saw the court keenly. Panduraja was like a Moon in the midst of stars. Kunti liked him and garlanded him. The marriage was celebrated in a grand manner.

Panduraja roaming in the forest :

Later Panduraja heard about the beauty of Madri, daughter of Madra king. Panduraja wanted to marry her. Elders like Bheeshma permitted Panduraja to marry her. The marriage took place and Kunti got a step-wife.

King Dhrutarashtra was elder to Panduraja and he was blind. Though the blind Dhrutarashtra was the king, Punduraja was managing the matters relating to the kingdom. Panduraja had great respect for his elder brother. He waged wars against kings and secured the treasure and filled the big boxes with a lot of gold and money. Dhrutarashtra performed many yagas.

Panduraja earned fame and name for his valour and charity. He was loved by the people.

Bheeshma and Vidura were affectionate to Panduraja. His grand-mother Satyavati and mothers loved him. At times of need, they used to call on Panduraja. In the palace of the queen, in the Kuru sabha and in the public Panduraja established his prestige.

He was always busy with raids on neighbouring countries, political issues, and solving the problems of the public. He had no time to spend joyfully. He decided to lead a happy life for some time. He thought that forest was a better choice than the living places of human beings. Who knows what kind of calamity befalls? He proceeded to the thick forest along with his two wives to lead a peaceful life. Everyday eatables cosmetics, decoratives were supplied to them from Hastinapura. Panduraja was spending his time more luxuriously in tents than the royal palaces. He had forgotten the word leading a luxurious life with his two wives Kunti and Madri.

Curse to Panduraja :

One day Panduraja had been to forest for hunting. No animal was found by him. He failed to catch a single animal. He got angry for not finding at least a deer. He left the arrow in the direction of a couple of deer he had spotted the mating deer couple fell down. One of them, taking last breath said to Panduraja "I am a saint named Kindama. My wife and I took the shapes of deers to have intercourse. There is nothing wrong in killing animals in the forest as a part of hunt. Being a king in the dynasty of Bharata, you have behaved worse than professional hunters. Hunters kill animals. It is a common affair. But they do not kill animals suffering from ailments, unable to run away, or engaged in sexual act. But you have hunted and caused death to us. The rishi has cursed Panduraja "As soon as you meet with your wife, you will die". Rishi took his last breath. Panduraja became nerveless.

Asram life :

Panduraja lost his energy and interest in the kingdom. He decided to lead the life of a sage in meditation. He asked Kunti and Madri to go over to Hastinapuram and inform to elders that he had renounced the kingdom and decided to stay at Asram. Kunti and Madri wept loudly and said firmly "We don't go, we will be here only. If you leave us we will take our lives". There was no other way but to accept their

company with him. He lost interest in life. He gave away gifts to rishis. He went to mountain Satasrunga where he built up Asram. He used to lead the life of a sage.

You will be blessed with sons:

On the day of new moon, some of the rishis were going to Satyaloka to see Brahma. Panduraja also wanted to follow them with his two wives. But there was no possibility as he had no sons. As per the verdict of Veda, one cannot enter heaven in the absence of sons. He asked rishis to show the right path to go to heaven. Rishis informed him that he would beget sons with the blessings of Gods.

Influence of Mantra :

Panduraja was worried much for children. He called Kunti and explained to her his sadness of heart. He told her "My father Vichitraveerya lost his life in lust. I was born to my mother by Vyasa. Now I am almost dead. The way to get sons, is only adoption of Devara Nyaya. You know that your younger sister Srutasena got sons by Brahmins who perform Yagas. People having sons only will attain Moksha. The tradition of adopting Devara Nyaya was acceptable by Dharma.

Panduraja asked Kunti to get sons by Brahmins. He said that there was nothing wrong in obliging the word of husband. Kunti became calm and soft. She

realized the importance of Mantra taught by Doorvasa Rishi in her childhood. She did not like to get sons by a human. She promised her husband that she will get sons with the help of the Mantra taught by Doorvasa. Pandu Raja felt happy. He asked her to call the god of Dharma. She prayed Samavarthy i.e, Yamadharma Raja. Yama appeared before her, and blessed her with a son. With the blessings of Yama, Kunti delivered a male child who was called Yudhishthira. He was called Dharmaraja also. Panduraja asked her to get another son by Vayudeva. She agreed. She prayed Vayu Deva and got Bheemasena as a son . In the meanwhile Pandu Raja heard that Dhrutarashtra got one hundred sons from Gandhari. Panduraja feared the danger from sons of Gandhari to his sons. So he wanted one more son with great strength to win the enemies. He asked Kunti to pray God Indra to get a son.

Kunti invited Indra and prayed for a son. He was pleased to bless her with a son. She got a son , shining like a heap of precious blue stones. The child was named as Arjuna. Thus Kunti got three sons. Panduraja was very happy with them . He used to play with them happily.

Sorrow of Madri:

Madri was very sad. Kunti got three sons. Gandhari got one hundred sons. Madri was left without children. She felt that the life of a woman was wasteful

without children. She approached Panduraja in a lovely place. She requested him to ask Kunti to get sons for her also. Panduraja obliged her and asked Kunti to get son for Madri also. He asked Kunti to pray Aswini deities and get sons for Madri. Kunti prayed Aswini deities to bless Madri with sons. Madri gave birth to twins. They were named as Nakula and Sahadeva. Thus Panduraja had five sons i.e, three from Kunti and two from Madri. These five sons were called " Pancha Pandavas".

Death of Panduraja :

The season was spring. Plants and trees were in full bloom with flower. Lovely bees were flying with sweet sounds. Cuckoos were welcoming the season. Madri went to see the pleasing nature. Raja Pandu saw Madri. He followed her silently.

Kunti never neglected watching Madri. Always she had an eye on Madri. As she was very busy in performing santarpana to Brahmins in Asram, Kunti thought that Madri was inside the Asram.

Madri and Panduraja enjoyed the beauty of nature filled with bloomed flowers. Madri attracted the heart of Panduraja with her marvellous beauty. Madri wore colourful flowers and appeared as Rati Devi, wife of Manmatha. Panduraja smelt the garland Madri wore and kissed her cheek . Madri was afraid of the King.

She turned her face to escape from him like a snake. Raja caught her tightly . Madri refused to fulfil his desire saying No…. No....... Raja Pandu gave a deaf ear to her. He could not control himself and became mad with lust. Immediately he fell down and lost life.

Sahagamana of Madri

Madri was weeping at her husband. On hearing her cry, Kunti rushed to the spot. Sons and sages residing at Satasrunga came to the place. All were sad. Kunti came forward and pulled aside Madri and said " I will accompany our husband. Please take care of our sons".

Madri pushed Kunti back and said " I will accompany him as you married Raja Pandu in Swayamvara. You were responsible for the existence of their dynasty. You made the way easy for the Raja to go to Heaven. You fulfilled his desire. I am responsible for his death as I could not take care of him, knowing the effect of the curse. I am of no use. I am unable to protect and safeguard the children".

Madri requested Kunti to allow her to live with the husband and satisfy him atleast in another loka. "You can safeguard the interests of children" said Madri. Satisahagamana is not a must. It is optional. Those who were willing could take up Sahagamana and others need not.

The residents of Satasrunga pacified Kunti and her sons, and got them to Hastinapuram and handed them over to elders of Kuru dynasty.

Thus Kunti became a widow when her sons were too young. So she had to take up the responsibility of their education and safety.

Education of Pandavas and Kowravas :

Sons of Gandhari and Kunti were co-students. Duryodhana, Dussasana and their brothers were called Gandhareyas. Yudhishthira, Bheema, Arjuna , Nakula and Sahadeva were called Kownteyas. Nakula and Sahadeva sons of Madri were also considered sons of Kunti. For the five sons of Panduraja, Kunti was the care taker.

Dronacharya, Krupacharya were their teachers. Drona loved Arjuna and had more affection for him. So he taught important and powerful Astras to Arjuna. Other princes of surrounding, neighbouring countries also studied along with Kowravas and Pandavas in the college of Adharvana. Soon the boys grew up. They became experts in education.

Exhibition of talent in Astravidya :

A show was arranged to exhibit the talent and abilities of Princes in archery and in the use of other weapons. This was called “Kumarastravidya Pradarsana”. King Dhrutarashtra, and Gandhari sat in the first row. Kunti

sat by the side of Gandhari . Brahmins like Vyasa came and attended the function. Great people like Bheeshma, Vidura, Salya, Sakuni, Somadatta and other elders, and relatives occupied the chairs to witness the show. The auditorium was decorated magnificiently.

The princes one by one showed their skill and abilities in archery. Arjuna got the chance to participate in archery. He was black. His eyes were like lotuses. He wore iron armour. He appeared like a young elephant. His way of using arrows in different methods was excellent and impressed everyone. With one arrow he poured rain, with another fire. The skills shown by Arjuna were wonderful. Kunti witnessed the tactful handling of astras by Arjuna and felt very happy. She had many expectations on Arjuna. The praise of Arjuna that " no one would surpass Arjuna" had reached the heights of the sky.

Entrance of Karna :

At that time a fearful sound like a thunder bolt fallen on a hill was heard. One stranger stood at the entrance. He slapped his shoulders hard to show his strength. Everyone understood that the stranger came to the place to show his strength and talent in archery. Pandavas went to Dronacharya. Kowravas went to Duryodhana. The stranger had a gigantic personality. He had a fair complexion. He had natural earnings twinkling and diamond armour. He was shining like the

Sun. He held a huge bow in hand . He entered the Auditorium. He paid respects to Dronacharya and Krupacharya.

The stranger turned to Arjuna and said “ I too know archery. I too can show it. Don’t think that you are the only person talented”.

Dronacharya allowed him to exhibit his skill in archery. He showed all the skills shown by Arjuna. He wanted to have a wrestling contest with Arjuna.

Yes! He is my son:

Kunti came to the conclusion that the new person was her son who was left by her in River Aswini. He was competing with his own brother. She was prepared to announce him as her eldest son with a view that six brothers would live in one family. She thought her negligence would result in chaos. Meanwhile black clouds spread over the sky. Kunti fell unconscious.

Karna as king of Anga Rajya :

Arjuna had picked up an argument with the stranger. Arjuna shouted at him “You have come to this place without invitation. You are talking a lot unnecessarily. Who are you? get out”.

Krupacharya continued “Oh! Boy! You are behaving without knowing your status. Arjuna is a kshatriya. Only kshatriyas can compete with kshatriyas in wrestling. Is your father a king? Are you a king?

Karna could not give a reply. He bent his head in humiliation. Then Duryodhana came to his rescue. He was waiting for a competent equivalent to fight with Arjuna. Immediately he informed his father Dhrutarashtra and coronated Karna then and there as Anga Raja. Duryodhana provided him with all the facilities required for Royal life. The person who came up by his own efforts was Karna. Karna and Duryodhana became friends. While Kunti was witnessing the scene, Karna joined the opposite party of Duryodhana. Kunti became helpless. She heaved a sign.

Pandavas in Lac house:

Pandavas and Kouravas always had enmity. Dhrutarashtra felt uneasy in his heart of hearts. But he was unable to express publicly. One day Duryodhana expressed his sadness to his father. He asked his father to seek a plan to block the Pandavas growing strength. Son Duryodhana told his father that it would be good if Pandavas along with mother Kunti were in a distant place for some time. With the consent of father, Duryodhana shifted the residence of Pandavas to Varanavatam. Pandavas with their mother entered the newly constructed house. It was made of Lac (wax). The walls of the house were soft and shining. Bheema suspected and tested the material used for construction. It was clear that the house was constructed with lac (wax) which would be burnt by flames. Bheema warned

and asked others to be alert as there was danger with fire. Vidura had partiality for Pandavas. He knew the cunning tactics and nature of Duryoadhana. He pitied the Pandavas and sent a message secretly containing the date and time fixed to burn the house of Pandavas. He arranged sub-way to Pandavas to escape from danger. Pandavas were alert.

Safety place :

A Boya maid was serving Kunti in Varanavatam. She was a spy appointed by Duryodhana. She was carrying news to Duryodhana. An architect namely Purochana was also living there. He was ready to put a fire to the house after mid-night on the day of Krishna Chaturdasi. On that day Kunti performed Annadana Santarpana to all house-wives in the village. Lady spy had five sons. She and her sons took meals fully and drank and slept near the house constructed with lac (wax). At mid-night Bheema woke up and set fire to the house of Purochana silpacharya (architect) first. He sent Kunti and his brothers into the tunnel and set fire to their house made of lac. Pandavas and their mother Kunti escaped through tunnel and reached a safe place.

Birth of Ghatotkacha :

Kunti was unable to walk speedily and steadily as she had no sleep. The brothers were also tired.

Knowing their inability to walk, Bheema lifted them. Kunti sat on the neck, Dharmaraja and Arjuna sat on each shoulder. Nakula and Sahadeva were carried in armpits of Bheema.Bheema carried mother and his four brothers speedily. He crossed Ganga river and travelled through thick forest till evening. They took rest under a banyan tree. Bheema saw a lake near a tree. He drank water and sat there. Mother and brothers were in sleep. Bheema sat thinking of someone else.

The lady demon Hidimbi came to Bheema. She fell in love with him. Bheema was stubborn and did not yield to her. In the mean while he-demon Hidimba brother of Hidimbi came there roaring loudly. Bheema killed him fiercely. Hidimbi requested Bheema to marry her. Bheema refused to marry her saying that demons were not to be believed. Bheema threatened her. Hidimbi took shelter with Kunti. Kunti pitied Hidimbi. She asked Bheema to marry Hidimbi. Bheema obliged his mother's order and married her. Hidimbi gave birth to Ghatotkacha.

Funeral rites to Pandavas :

It was learnt that the house of Pandavas at Varanavatam was burnt. One woman and five men were burnt alive. The news spread to Hastinapuram. Dhrutarashtra felt sorry for their demise and performed funeral rites to Pandavas and their mother. Duryodhana was very happy for having got ridden of Pandavas.

I have given a word:

Pandavas went to Ekachakrapura Agraharam . They stayed in a brahmin's house. Pandavas were living with a purohit. One day Kunti and Bheema were present in the house. Others went for begging. All of a sudden, the family members of brahmin cried loudly . Kunti wanted to help them in crucial time as they provided shelter to Pandavas. Bheema asked his mother to enquire into the matter and know the fact. Kunti went to them and returned.

Kunti said " My dear son Bheemasena! I have given a word. You must keep up my word. Here on the banks of Yamuna there is a giant called Baka. He was falling upon the people of Agraharam and eating them. One day the elders of the village have made an agreement with him. The giant should not come to the village. He should be there itself. Every day villagers should send one man, two buffaloes, a cart load of rice regularly from each house. He eats them all. Today the turn of our host has come. He has to supply all these things. "I go" says the host. " No. I go" says his wife. "No I go " says his daughter. They are weeping. I have given word that I will send my son. This is the matter".

I am not a foolish woman

Bheema prepared to face the Rakshasa. He asked his mother to provide food in large quantity for self.

He was very happy. The other four brothers of Bheema returned home. Dharmaraja grasped that Bheema was ready to fight with some body. He questioned his mother whether Bheema was a burden to her to feed. She said “No mother leaves her child even if he is handicapped”. Dharmaraja was sad to send Bheema to Rakshasa. Bheema laughed at his elder brother. Mother laughed at him and told Dharmaraja “Bheema had a strong body like a diamond. Bheema was not weaker in any matter than Bakasura. I am not a foolish woman. On the tenth day of his birth, Bheema slipped from my hand and fell down on the hard rock. He had no single injury on his body but that hard rock was broken into pieces. He protects not only the family of the host but also this entire place. You do not worry.” Bheema killed Baka.

Travel to Panchala Country

King of Panchala announced Swayamvara of Draupadi. From many countries, princes were going to the Swayamvara at the capital of king Drupada. Brahmins also went to Panchala in groups. Kunti told her sons, “ It was not good to stay at one place for a long period. I learnt that the land of south Panchala was fertile and rich. People will offer sweets, milk, curd and sufficient food to Brahmins with due respect. I want to go there”. On hearing the words of mother Kunti, Pandavas were ready with bag and baggage.

They travelled to Panchala which was filled with floated population. Huge tents were built all over the town. It was busy and full of soldiers and chariots. Kunti and Pandavas stayed in a potter's house. Pandavas appeared like brahmins wearing the skins of deer, Jute clothes sacred ash and pronouncing Mantras from Vedas. Pandavas were like burning pieces of fire covered with ashes . Kunti stayed at the guest house. Five Pandavas went to swayamvara sabha.

Swayamvara of Draupadi

Draupadi was black like a lilly and beauty of three lokas. She stood with a garland of white flowers in hand. She was like a sixth arrow of Manmatha. Princes in a good number were present. Delighted sounds of marriage band were being heard. The voice of variety of public resembled the voice of the sea.

Drushtadyumna, brother of Draupadi came forward and asked the people to be calm and silent. He showed a huge bow worshipped with sandal wood powder and flowers, along with arrows and the machine in which fish made of gold was hanging in the heights of the sky. He announced that one who shot at the fish using five arrows handling the bow present there, would be garlanded by his sister Draupadi. Enthusiastic young princes tried to shoot at the fish but could not succeed. No kshatriya king was bold enough to come forward to perform the task. In disguise of a brahmin, Arjuna

came to handle the bow and arrows. He succeeded in shooting the fish as announced by Drupada. Draupadi garlanded Arjuna.

Equal distribution to Five Pandavas :

Brahmins were very happy. They were dancing with joy. Kshatriyas were ashamed with unbelievable jealousy. Kouravas picked up quarrel and caused nuisance. Krishna and Balarama enjoyed the fun of it. After the noise subsided, Bheema and Arjuna took Draupadi to their guest house. Dharmaraja, Nakula and Sahadeva reached guest house prior to Bheema and Arjuna.

Arjuna shouted out of joy " Mother I brought Bhiksha". The bride was behind Arjuna. Kunti could not notice the bride. As usual she said to divide and take. When Kunti came to know that Bhiksha was not food but bride, she was stunned. Kunti felt sorry for the unfair word she uttered. Kunti expressed her grief at what she said unknowingly. The fact was that Pandavas never disobeyed the word of their mother.

Fact was decided in advance :

Draupadi was black but she was fairer than Sachi devi. Five Pandavas were fond of her . When Bheema married Hidimbi, no other Pandava had such desire for Hidimbi. Now the situation was different. Dharmaraja understood the secrecy behind the fact. Dharmaraja said " Mother! We never denied your word.

Now also we will obey your word. We five brothers will marry Draupadi." The problem was solved. But Drupada, father of Draupadi was not satisfied. He said that it was injustice. At this juncture VedaVyasa arrived. He explained the secrecy of her life. He said that it was already decided to Draupadi to have five husbands by Bramha. There was nothing wrong in marrying Draupadi to five Pandavas. Marriage took place.

Half kingdom to Pandavas :

Pandavas were enjoying luxuries in Drupadapuram. The news reached Hastinapuram. Pandavas were not only alive but also earned support of relatives. Duryodhana was jealous of Pandavas and wanted to create troubles to them. Bheeshma and Drona did not allow Duryoadhana to play mischief. They taught Dhrutarastra to be good. Dhrutarashtra wanted to give half the kingdom. Vidura went to the capital of Drupada and brought Pandavas to Hastinapuram . Dhrutarashtra gave half the kingdom to Pandavas. Pandavas constructed Indraprastha puram. They performed Rajasuya yaga with glorious victory. Duryodhana could not tolerate the betterment of Pandavas.

Kunti witnessed Rajasuya yaga performed by her sons. She felt that she was lucky. The happiness of Kunti did not last long. Pandavas were defeated by Sakuni in fraud gambling. Pandavas lost kingdom and

property to Kouravas. Kunti was very sad at this incident.

Krishna visited Kunti :

Kunti was at Hastinapuram. Pandavas were in the forest. On successful completion of Aranyavasa for twelve years and Ajnatavasa for one year, Pandavas requested Dhrutarashtra to do justice to them. But their request resulted in failure.

Pandavas were preparing to wage a war. At last they sent Sri Krishna as an ambassador to Hastinapuram. Negotiations made by Sri Krishna were not successful. While returning, Sri Krishna met Kunti at her house. Dhrutarashtra came to Kunti's house along with his men when Krishna was present there. Krishna touched the feet of Kunti and explained the matter related to his mediation to avoid war with Kouravas. Krishna asked Kunti "I am going back. What message would you like to give to your sons ?"

Courageous message :

So far Kunti was in her relative's house. She never uttered unfair and unpleasing words. Now without hesitation , in the presence of Dhrutarashtra and other elders she addressed Krishna "Mine is one word. Valour is life for the dynasty of king. Begging for livelihood is wrong. Dharmaraja might have heard the life style of ancestors Muchikunda and Srunjaya. Your mediation is good. It is highly impossible to establish friendship

between Pandavas and Kauravas. My sons will not forget the scene of Dussosasana pulling my daughter-in-law in the sabha. There was no chance to punish Kouravas at that time. Nothing is lost now. Life without prestige is useless. I encourage my sons to live with valour and courage" Kunti embraced Sri Krishna.

Sri Krishna with folded hands paid respects to Kunti. Kunti blessed Krishna.

On hearing Kunti, Dhrutarashtra was astonished. He thought that her words were a death blow to Kouravas.

Sri Krishna had gone to the place of Pandavas. War was inevitable. Kunti was able to speak harshly but she was unable to control her mind.

She could not tolerate any danger that might befall either Pandavas or Karna. At last she took hard decision with courage.

You are my son !

Karna proceeded to river Ganga to pay respects to Surya. Kunti followed him secretly. Karna was in meditation. She sat behind Karna silently. Karna completed rituals. He stood up and saw Kunti . He was surprised and introduced himself as Radheya with Suta gotra. He saluted to her and asked "What can I do for you".

Kunti replied " You are not Radheya, you do not belong to the caste of Suta. You are my son. I gave birth to you. Then I was unmarried."

She said “I was in the house of Kunti Bhoja. Doorvasa Rishi taught me mantra. To examine the power of Mantra, I called Surya who blessed me with a son. Being unmarried, I was afraid of the society. I kept you in a box and left in Ganga river. Suta caught the box. You became the servant of Duryodhana. You must know your dynasty. Slavery is not good to you. Yudhisthira and other Pandavas are younger to you. They respect you. You will get kingdom if you come. Listen to my word. Please come.”

Soon after Kunti uttered these words, a sound was heard from Surya “This is true. Listen to Kunti . Your future will be good.”

Do not forget your promise :

Karna was stubborn. He said to Kunti “ What you said might be true . But you have not brought me up as Kshatriya. Now I am considered as Radheya. You cannot get any benefit with my relationship as a son. By the grace of God Sun, I thought my birth to be spotless. But it was in secrecy so far. There will not be any use in making it public."

Karna said “ Already the name and fame of Arjuna are well established in the world. If I join Pandavas now, I will be blamed saying that I am afraid of Pandavas. The society will laugh at me and will not believe me. I was an unidentified person. But Duryodhana came to my rescue and he has kept hopes

on me. It is not advisable to deceive him at the time of the war. The people fed by Duryodhana are to sacrifice their lives for his sake. Karna never becomes ungrateful. Any how you have come so long. You are talking with motherly affection. So I am promising you that I treat Arjuna only as my enemy. I will not kill other four Pandavas even if I catch them in the war field. But I will not leave Arjuna. Even if I am killed by Arjuna it earns name and fame to me. Either Arjuna or Karna dies; the Pandavas will be five. You please forget that Pandavas are six". Kunti had no other word or thought to talk with him.

Kunti said “I never ask you to protect Arjuna but let others be left free”. She hugged Karna. Karna touched the feet of his mother. She left the place.

This incident reduced the strength of Karna. He has to remember the promise given to his mother, when he faces Yudhishthira, Bheema, Nakula and Sahadeva without harming them, even if they hurt him. Kunti reduced prestige and value of caste when she left Karna in river Ganga. Now she reduced the physical strength of Karna by revealing his birth secret.

If Kouravas win the war, Karna will not get the crown. His image increases. If he joins Pandavas and they win the war, he will get crown. If the secrecy of birth of Karna is made known to Dharmaraja, what will be the result? Kunti knows the result of revealing the

secrecy to Dharmaraja. If Dharmaraja knows the fact, he will never fight against Karna. He respects the word of elder brother Karna. No doubt Karna prefers coronation to Duryodhana and he holds an umbrella to him. Dharmaraja and other Pandavas will become slaves to Kouravas and serve them holding umbrellas and hand fans called chamaras.

Sorrowful scenes everywhere :

War was over. Gandhari lost all of her sons in the war. Duryodhana, Dussasana and other Kouravas along with their sons and relatives died in the war. Sons of Draupadi i.e, Upa Pandavas lost their lives. Abhimanyu son of Subhadra also took his last breath. The dynasty of enemies perished completely. But no advantage to Pandavas. One side Gandhari was weeping and otherside Draupadi too. The entire atmosphere was filled with sorrow and pain.

Curse of Gandhari :

Pandavas had to visit Gandhari to console her. No one was bold enough to approach and talk to her. It was a great war. Winners of the war will be reduced to ashes if they appear before Gandhari. Gandhari is a chaste and virtuous wife. If winners, i.e, Pandavas will not appear before her, she will curse them . At last she cursed Sri Krishna that the entire dynasty of Yadavas will perish with internal clashes and Sri Krishna will meet a pitiable death.

Pandavas were not thinking of their mother. They wanted to see Gandhari first. They must seek pardon and next they had to think of their mother. They approached Gandhari and fell on her feet to beg her forgiveness. Dharmaraja had a different approach. He said that he does not want kingdom and it will be surrended to the elder brother of his father i.e, Dhrutarashtra. He wept. Gandhari cooled down. She asked them to go and see their mother, Kunti. Then Pandavas felt that it was rebirth to them.

Pandavas fell on the feet of mother Kunti and wept loudly. Mother Kunti touched their bodies and she also wept loudly seeing and touching the injuries on their bodies. Meanwhile Draupadi too came with uncontrolled cries. Subhadra came with sadness. Every one was weeping. No grandson of Kunti was left with life. Kunti was not happy.She lost interest in life and her mind was diverted towards Philosophy and Viragya. Kunti wept silently for his eldest son Karna. She questioned herself being a mother in what way she was helpful to Karna? She left the child in the river. Few days before war, she revealed the secrecy of birth of Karna and sought protection for Pandavas. The damage done to Karna by Kunti was irreparable. The head of Karna was cut off by her son Arjuna. If Arjuna had known that Karna was his brother, he could not have killed him. Kunti had continuous thoughts of past. Kunti lost stability. She could not help Karna when he

was alive. So she decided to reveal the secrecy to Dharmaraja to perform funeral rites to Karna. It was her last desire.

Perform funeral rites to your elder brother :

After taking bath in Ganga, Dhrutarashtra, Dharmanandana, Bheema and others were performing funeral rites to all Kouravas. There were many groups of people here and there. Kunti came out with open mind. Her face was wet with tears. She asked Yudhishthira to perform funeral rites to Karna also. She told Dharmaraja that Karna was her eldest son. He was born with natural ear rings, natural armor. He stood like a protected wall to Kouravas. He earned name and fame for charity. He was praised by gods. Such a great noble person killed by Arjuna was her eldest son.

Kunti told Dharmanandana "In my younger days, I gave birth to him. Then I was unmarried. With the blessings of Surya I got Karna. For fear of society, I left him in Ganga. He was caught by Suta and then he became Radheya. He became great by his own strength and effort. He earned kingdom. He became best friend of Duryodhana. He was beaten by God and his life ended in misery." Shedding tears, Kunti asked Dharmaraja to perform funeral rites to Karna as he was her eldest son and brother of Yudhishthira. Saying these words with pain, Kunti fell unconscious.



How you keep the matter in secrecy?

Dharmaraja had a feeling of ten Agneya Astras falling upon him at a time. Dharmaraja had lost sense. Bheema and Arjuna cut a sorry figure.

Dharmaraja questioned mother Kunti " Was Karna my elder Brother? With the support of Karna Duryodhana was able to pick a quarrel and wage war against us. With the strength of the strong shoulders of Karna, the power of Duryodhana and his subordinates was flourished. When the chariot of Karna entered the battle field, our battalion of soldiers ran away with fear in all directions. We were insulted by him, whenever we faced him. I was sleepless because of Karna as his plans, and views were not known easily. You had given birth to such a great warrior and hidden the fact like a fire in a saree's edge. How was it possible to hide the secret for such a long period?''

"Oh! Mother! You caused untold difficulty for us. If it was known to me prior to war, that Karna was our brother, no war would have taken place. Such a large massacre would not have occurred. I never underwent such pain, even when Abhimanyu and Upa Pandavas and Kouravas were dead. With great grief Dharmaraja performed funeral rites to Karna.

Curse of Dharmaraja to women :

Later Narada came. He told the biography of Karna. Grown in suta caste, curse of a Brahmin, curse of a

teacher, stealing natural ear-rings by Indra with foul play, revelation of his birth secret by Kunti, degradation of his position as Ardha ratha by Bheeshma, waste of Indra sakti for killing Ghatotkacha instead of Arjuna, the tactics of Sri Krishna saving Arjuna from Nagastra, discouragement by Salya a charioteer to Karna were prominent among the many reasons leading to the death of Karna who fought bravely till his death. You know how Arjuna killed Karna. You know how Sri Krishna took the role of charioteer to Arjuna. You know how Arjuna had boon from a God. Karna was a great warrior. Hearing the words of Narada, Dharmaraja was about to collapse with sorrow. Kunti was beside him and caught Dharma raja. Had she been calm, it would have been better. But she said to Dharmaraja " Do not weep my son! I have told him that he is my son. I invited him to join you people. I even told him that you were his brother & you would give the kingdom to him.

Inspite of all that he stayed with Duryodhana and died.

On hearing Kunti Dharmaraja became wild with anger. He blamed mother Kunti that she was responsible for such a disaster, hiding the secret. He cursed women that no secret would remain unslipped in their mouths. From that time onwards "the proverb no simple secret remains unrevealed in the mouth of a woman" came into existence in the society.

Kunti too to forest :

Dharmaraja was ruling the kingdom. Dhrutarashtra and Gandhari were served by him with devotion. But Dhrutarashtra had no peace of mind. Dhrutarashtra wanted to leave the palace.

One day Dhrutarashtra said to Dharmaraja " I have harmed you. You are looking after me well without saying "No" to anything. The fraud and foul play committed by me is troubling me. I want to purify myself by leading vanavasa. The Kshatriya had only one of two choices. One is dying in war field or dying as a yogi. Now you are king. Hence your permission is required. Dharmaraja denied the proposal of Dhrutarashtra. Dhrutarashtra went on fasting. He fell down with thirst. He could not sit straight and fell down on Gandhari. Dharmaraja was afraid of him. Dharmaraja was astonished for the fact that the person who crushed Bheema's statue made of iron into powder with strength of ten thousand elephants, was unable to sit stable and fell down on Gandhari, a woman. Dharmaraja thought that it was fate and wept.

In the mean while Vyasa came. He ordered Dharma raja not to stop Dhrutarashtra and to send him to Tapovana. There was no other way except sending Dhrutarashtra to Tapovana. The news spread over the country. All people came to see the old couple . The people living in the palace surrounded them and fell

down on their feet. They felt sorry. Kunti was also prepared to go to the forest along with Dhrutarashtra and Gandhari.

No change in my decision

Dhrutarashtra walked with support of Gandhari. Gandhari took support from Kunti and walked on. Dhrutarashtra wanted to stop the people and daughters-in-law who came to see them off.They stayed in their places.

As Kunti was proceeding to the forest, her daughters-in-law could not stay. They were following her. Dharmaraja observed the situation and understood that his mother decided to go to forest.

He approached mother Kunti and asked “Mother I will follow my father’s elder brother . You take back home all these women with you”

Kunti replied “No! Dhrutarashtra will not agree to your company. I am supposed to serve Dhrutarashtra and Gandhari. When they go to forest, I cannot stay at home. I have decided to follow them. I will go.” Kunti removed the hand of Gandhari from her shoulder and turned to her son. Gandhari and Dhrutarashtra were continuing their walk slowly.

Dharmaraja fell down and caught her feet obstructing her walk. She said “Dharmaraja! Please do not say No. Look after brothers affectionately.

Remember Karna. I have committed a sin. I have suppressed the birth of Karna and my mind is not stable. I am sad. Please continue charity in the name of Karna. Sin will be lessened at least to some extent with charity. Do not think of me. I will go to the forest"

I do not want the fruit of the kingdom :

Bheema and Arjuna also tried to stop their mother. Dharmaraja wanted to stop his mother. He said "Mother! Do not say that you will go. I will not agree. You must be here. Without your and Krishna's valuable guidance, we cannot survive. So far you have guided us in right path. In future also we need your guidance." Dharmaraja begged her not to leave the place. Bheema took the opportunity and continued dialogue. Bheema said "Mother! It was your instructions that we waged war against Kouravas. Today you want to leave the kingdom. What more do you want to stay here? Is there any requirement for you here? Once you told that Nakula and Sahadeva will be put into troubles in vanavasa. You provoked us to take revenge. Now you want to leave all of us." Bheema caught his head and wept. All brothers were worried. Daughters-in-law Draupadi and Subhadra were weeping. Kunti felt irk-some. But she did not care. She thought that scolding is the only remedy. Wiping out the tears Kunti said like this "You were defeated in fraud gambling. Dussasana caught the hair of Draupadi, pulled her and brought

to the Court. He insulted her. All elders were silent. You were forced to bear patience. You had been to forests and came back. I got angry when you utterd the word “treaty”. You have no sense that others will laugh at you. If sons come down to this low status, the prestige of Pandu raja will be degraded. Hence I spoke harshly to Sri Krishna when he came as a mediater to us and Kouravas. I spoke like that for your welfare and prosperity but not for my Royal procession.

“My dear sons! Hear me. You have kept your promises. It is enough for me that you are ruling the kingdom happily. I have given away charities. I have seen the Yaga performed by you in higher standards. I have no desire for anything. I go, please send me happily. I don’t want to enjoy the fruit of victory”.

“I am in need of Moksha, the highest stage in life through meditation. It is only possible through practice. I cannot expect such company of elders in life in future. I will spend time in meditation while serving Gandhari and Dhrutarashtra. I will not come back. It is my final and firm decision” Kunti said to her sons.

The matter was known to Dhrutarashtra who was moving forward. Inspite of humble requests made by her sons, Kunti was reluctant to stay with them. Dhrutarashtra sent Vidura and Sanjaya to have

conversation with Kunti. They asked her to stay with her sons and oblige Dharmaraja. But Kunti did not agree. She expressed her firm determination again and again. The sons went round Kunti as a mark of respect pradakshina and touched her feet. Dharmaraja entrusted his mother Kunti to old couple Gandhari and Dhrutarashtra and returned. Kunti went to forest.

Your biography is pure :

One day Dharmaraja along with his relatives visited Dhrutarashtra Gandhari and Kunti in the forest. Vyasa had also come there. All were happy. Vyasa asked Dhrutarashtra "If you have any wish, ask me, I will fulfil."

Dhrutarashtra said that he was satisfied with the appearance of Vyasa. Gandhari had different desire. She asked Vyasa to show her sons who lost lives in war. Hearing Gandhari, Draupadi and Subhadra were tempted to see their sons. Kunti too wanted to see Karna. Vyasa understood the minds of Draupadi, Subhadra and Kunti.

Kunti expressed her desire openly without any sense of shame. She said "Karna is my son. Prior to my marriage, in my younger days, I have got son by Surya with the influence of Mantra. It happened without my knowledge." She did not feel shame. She said Vyasa "Whether it was right or wrong I do not know" and

she wept. Vyasa had sympathy for her. He said to her "Oh! Daughter-in-law! It is true whatever you told. There is no fault of yours. Don't be afraid. Gods can make wonders. You were responsible only to the extent of giving birth to Karna. Other things happened as they had to be. You have not lost your chastity and maiden hood. Hence you are the most respectable woman in your dynasty. Your biography is clean and pure." Vyasa consoled her with due regard.

Presence of Heroes lost lives in war :

The news that "The heroes died in the war will be exhibited by Vyasa" spread. The citizens had come in large number to witness their leaders and warriors who died in the war. Vyasa asked them to wait at the shore of Ganga river next day morning.

It was morning. Vyasa invited the dead warriors pouring water from two hands towards Sun. Wonderful sound was heard from water. Duryodhana, his brothers, sons, Karna, Abhimanyu, sons of Draupadi, Bahlika etc., and Drupada, Virata, Sakuni, Bheeshma, Drona were all coming. It was surprise to see the divine bodies with sacred garlands, sacred clothes, sacred ornaments and divine scents. Their faithful servants were also with them. All were happy and they loved each other. They were served by Apsaras. Gandharvas praised them.

The scene was surprising to one and all. Vyasa gave divine sight to Dhrutarashtra to see the wonderful scene. Knowing the fact Gandhari untied the cloth that covered her eyes. She saw sons, grand sons, brothers and great warriors like Bheeshma. She felt happy. The divine people who came on invitation of Vyasa, shared happiness with their kith and kin. They stayed there for that night. The next day morning they left to their places.

Kunti saw her eldest son Karna to her entire satisfaction with joy.

Dharmaraja and others took leave and returned to Hastinapuram. Some time elapsed.

Victim of wild fire :

Gandhari, Dhrutarashtra, Kunti and Sanjaya wanted to leave the asram. They wanted to go to near by places in forest at the entrance of Ganga river to meditate. Dhrutarashtra was on fast. He took water only. Gandhari was also taking water only. Kunti was also on a fast for a month. Sanjaya used to take food once in a week. Kunti was helpful to Gandhari. Sanjaya was helping to Dhrutarashtra. One day they were returning to asram after taking bath in Ganga. They were caught by fire with fearful flames. It surrounded them. Flames were spreading with heavy sounds. Wind also raged. Birds and animals burnt alive. The way is not visible. Smoke reached the heights of the sky and it was thick.

Big trees were being burnt. Dhrutarashtra said “Oh! Sanjaya! You try to escape. Any how we are unable to escape from this fire”.

Sanjaya said “How I can go leaving you?.”

Dhrutarashtra said “Sanjaya! When there is possibilitiy to escape, losing life is foolishness and a sin also. You please escape from fire.”

Sanjaya suggested to Dhrutarashtra to do yoga. Sanjaya told “I will escape” and climbed mountain Himalaya at one stretch. Fire surrounded Dhrutarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti who. Fearful fire captured them like a lion jumped on an elephant. The lives of three people came to an end.

Dharmaraja performed funeral rites to them.

“Kunti is Siddhi, Madri is Buddhi. Two goddesses came to earth”. This is what the Mahabharata has told us.